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A closed entrance to Naval Station Great Lakes in the far north suburbs will reopen after all, Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) said Monday after discussions with top Navy brass.

Last week, officials at Great Lakes said the entrance that fronts the new \$6 million King Drive crossing of the Union Pacific railroad tracks would remain closed except for special events. The gate isn't designed to be a major entrance to the base, and money for private security personnel isn't available, a base spokeswoman said.

North Chicago officials want the gate opened to help boost a nearby 40-acre commercial development called Sheridan Crossing. The base entrance, known as Gate 4, would allow easy access to Sheridan Crossing by thousands of Navy personnel, civilian government workers and visitors.

"Opening Gate 4 is a vital component of the revitalization of North Chicago and Sheridan Crossing development," Kirk said. "The increased traffic will bring new life and new businesses to the area, resulting in more jobs and prosperity for the city."

Rear Adm. Jon Bayless, commander of the Navy's Midwest Region, issued a statement with Kirk saying the gate would open.

"Gate 4 will open...to full commuter traffic to reduce gridlock in the community and to help North Chicago restart its business district," Bayless said.

The decision came after discussions between Kirk and the secretary of the Navy.

"The secretary of the Navy made the commitment to open the gate six years ago, and today

they are following through on that promise," Kirk said. North Chicago Mayor Leon Rockingham Jr. said: "I'm glad to see [Kirk] moved so quickly ... It's definitely something needed for the revitalization of North Chicago so we can open our doors to the Navy ... They can come out of that gate and be a part of our community."

It isn't clear whether the gate will be open 24 hours a day, Rockingham said. "They might close it at midnight. Still, it's good that it's opening," he said.